

# Documents on Diplomacy: Exercises

## Navigating the Path of Trade in Canton

### Directions:

I. These items are from the reading, *Excerpt from a Journey Shared* and from the documents, *The Consul at Canton* and *Samuel Shaw reporting in China* (especially paragraphs 18–29.) Locate these selections in the original documents. Read the material surrounding these selections to gain a more complete picture of trade in Canton.

II. Next, designate 2 items from the list as the most FASCINATING in the story of trade with China. Be prepared to explain your selections.

III. Designate 2 items from the list as the most FRUSTRATING in the story of trade with China. Be prepared to explain your selections.



- 1 By March 1783, American merchants were already beginning to plan a U.S. trade mission to China.



- 8 The Hoppo (Chief Officer of the Customs) assessed the cargo of the ships, also received special “gifts” from the Captains.



- 2 Major Samuel Shaw was named as the supercargo, or business manager, for the *Empress of China*.



- 9 The traders were confined to factories (buildings with warehouses on the lower floor and living quarters on the upper floors) to a small district within Canton. Occupying less than a quarter mile in frontage along the Pearl River, traders never saw life in China outside this area.



- 3 The *Empress of China* set sail from New York on February 22, 1784.



- 10 Samuel Shaw wrote in his diary, “Europeans, after a dozen years’ residence, have not seen more than what the first month presented to view.”



- 4 Upon arrival at Whampo, Western ships must engage a *Fiador* or security, before any cargo can be discharged.



- 11 No foreigners were allowed to remain in Canton throughout the year. When ships left, they had to live in the Portuguese colony of Macao until the arrival of the ships the next season.



- 5 Trade was conducted by a group of Chinese merchants, known as a *Co-hoang* (hong), each responsible for one of the Western countries. The hong were responsible for the housing and behavior of the foreigners with whom they traded.



- 12 Samuel Shaw felt the envy of the Europeans who traded in specie, whereas the Americans also had goods to trade for goods.



- 6 Samuel Shaw admired his hong partners, describing them as “intelligent, exact accountants, punctual to their engagements.”



- 13 The Americans took ginseng to trade with the Chinese and arrived back in New York with tea, silks, “fine tea tables, china in sets,” and gunpowder.



- 7 Each ship and factory had to have a *Comprador*, who supplied provisions and other necessities and a Linguist, who transacted all business with the Custom House in the City where no foreigners could go.



- 14 Samuel Shaw was commissioned as U.S. Consul to China, though without “Salary nor Perquisites. . .” by John Jay.